

Monroe County Domestic Violence Task Force

McCloskey Conference Room-Showers City Hall

September 20, 2013

Noon -1pm

Attending: Isabella Bravo, Middle Way House; Jackie Dakich, Monroe County Prosecutor's Office; Sarah Hunt, IU Protective Order Project; Sarah Kupferberg, IU Protective Order Project; Julie Ledford Durbin, Tell City, IN; Josefa Luce, Sherry Morris, Monroe County Clerk's Office & POP; Monroe County Prosecutor's Office; Linda Robbins, Monroe County Clerk; Julie Robertson, Monroe County Probation; Stephanie Shook, Monroe County Prosecutor's Office; Emily Smith, IU Protective Order Project; Mick Williams, Bloomington Police Department; Jennifer Young, Middle Way House; Beverly Calender -Anderson, City of Bloomington. **Guests:** Daniel Soto, City of Bloomington Latino Outreach Program; Misha Wee, WFIU Public Radio; Ashley Beaman, WFIU Public Radio; **Regrets:** Toby Strout, Brad Swain, Lara Weaver, Alyson Schwartz, Al Manns.

I. Following greetings and introductions, Beverly introduced Daniel Soto with the City of Bloomington Latino Outreach Program.

II. Responding to DV in Blommington/Monroe County's Spanish speaking community

Daniel explained that when he first came to Bloomington nearly 30 years ago, he thought he was the only Latino in town. He soon found opportunities to volunteer at LaCasa and little by little he began to see other Latinos around campus and in town. Latinos in Bloomington cover a broad cross-section, educationally, socio-economically and culturally. Years ago, Daniel says most people came to the U.S. with the intention of saving money to go back and buy a house or start a business. Now more of the population has reconciled to staying in the U.S.

Some of the issues faced by Latino newcomers to Bloomington:

- Spanish may be their second language and English, which some are just beginning to learn, their third;
- Acculturation brings traditions from home countries - some are good and some with negative consequences;
- The majority of the Mexicans in Monroe County are from a small community in Mexico, therefore most are related or connected to each others families in Mexico.
- There are about 4900 Latino families in Monroe County with 2-3 children per family. There are probably another 260 families without proper documentation who are not being counted;

- Immigrants - especially women who have come into this country illegally are survivors. To get here they have likely survived some form of violence, rape and/or trafficking. Domestic violence does not seem as bad as some of the things they've gone through. They see it as another thing they must survive in order to have a better life for their children.
- In many cases the male is the head of household - financially and emotionally. If someone without documentation is arrested they are turned over to ICE within 24 hours. This takes money from the household and the father away from his children. Consequently, there is a fear of law enforcement and deportation, so many victims do not call law enforcement. The dilemma is making sure the man will not abuse his wife/partner but also making sure he is around for his children.
- Many husbands or male heads of household are threatened by their partners learning English so it is forbidden. If the English speaking male leaves the household, the family is cut off from the English speaking world unless the children have learned the language.

Occurrences of domestic violence are no better or worse in the Latino community than in the larger community.

Needs in the Bloomington/Monroe County community:

- A social worker and/or therapist in the community with the language/cultural skills to relate to most of these families. Outside of Liz Lopez and Middle Way House there is no Spanish speaking, culturally competent social worker in the area; (Isabella stated that Middle Way House has Spanish-speaking on-scene advocates who are dispatched to the hospital for victims of sexual assault, when requested).
- A batterers services program for Spanish speaking men;

Daniel stated that translators help but it would be better to have someone who is bi-lingual and understands the intricacies of the language.

On Sundays from 2-4pm at the Monroe County Public Library there is a Spanish Conversation "class." Here Spanish-speakers can practice their English and English-speakers can practice Spanish. In addition to conversation, they may shop together or fix a meal together using only one of the languages.

Additionally, there are ongoing talks with the library to begin a home based English-language tutoring program. Women would gather in each other's home and be tutored in English. By meeting in homes, the need for childcare is negated and the distance between many of the homes is walkable making transportation a non-issue as well.